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SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED
NOTE FOR THE SECRETARY

FROM: John B. Bellinger

SUBJECT: European Response to Reports of CIA Secret Detention Sites in Europe

Press reports about alleged secret CIA detention sites in Eastern Europe have led the Council of Europe to open an investigation into the existence of such sites, resulting in an official request for information. Further, following press reports of suspect air flights in the region, several European countries (including Germany, Denmark, the UK, Italy, and Iceland) have queried us about possible renditions that might have occurred through their airspace. Recent press reports have also drawn international attention to Spain's ongoing investigation of allegations that the CIA has used facilities on Majorca in connection with prisoner transfers. Finally, the European Union has indicated that it will monitor the outcome of the various investigations underway for evidence that EU member states may have acted in contravention of their EU obligations.

On November 8, the Legal Affairs Committee of the Council of Europe (CoE) Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) appointed its Chairperson, Dick Marty (Switzerland), as rapporteur to examine the subject of alleged secret CIA detention centers, with a view to a possible urgent debate at the next Standing Committee's meeting in Bucharest on November 25. The Committee authorized visits to member States as needed, and Marty has requested that our Ambassador in Paris, in his capacity as U.S. Observer to the CoE, provide information regarding the allegations. In earlier resolutions, the Parliamentary Assembly called upon member States to "ensure that their territory and facilities are not used in connection with practices of secret detention or rendition in possible violation of international human rights law." On November 3 EU Commission spokesperson Roscam Abbing announced that the Commission would not investigate the allegations, suggesting that the task fell to the EU's member states. Yesterday, Commission Vice President Frattini asserted in a statement before the EU Parliament that the conduct described in press reports would constitute a "serious violation of the principles of the European Union" by the member states concerned. Finally, the ICRC remains concerned about all detainees whom it believes the USG has kept from ICRC access.

Romanian President Basescu, Prime Minister Tariceanu, and other Romanian officials have advised that they have no evidence of "secret prisons" alleged by Human Rights Watch. The outgoing Polish Defense and Foreign Ministers categorically denied the Washington Post's allegations, as did the President, and leaders of the incoming government expressed disbelief the story could be true. In Spain, Interior Minister Alonso remarked on television that it would be "very serious and intolerable" if the CIA in fact used Spanish airports to take prisoners to unknown destinations, but asked for "caution" as the investigation continues.

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Drafted: L/HRR - Gilda Brancato x 72773 11/9/05, updated 11/15/05 124032

Cleared: DRL/MLA - Julieta Noyes - ok
EUR - Kurt Volker - ok
L/PM - Josh Dorosin - ok
L/HRR - Robert Harris - ok
L/EUR - Peter Olson & Damon Terrill - ok
PRM/MCE - Carol Santos - ok
EUR/NCE - Janet Garvey - ok
EUR/NB - Vicky Middleton - ok
EUR/ERA - Rob Faucher - ok
G - Joseph Bracken - ok
EUR/WE - Italy / Spain - Kathy Allegrone - ok

CC: USGeneva - Jeffrey Kovar
L - Ronald Bettauer, Samuel Witten
L/LEI - Kenneth Propp
IO - Mark Lagon
IO/SHA - Bill Lucas

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